

# Bilingual Families

## Who are we?

**Bilingualism Matters** is a research and information centre in the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. It was set up in 2008 and now has branches all over Europe and the US. We aim to raise awareness of bilingualism in families, schools and the public sector.

What **Bilingualism Matters** can do for parents:

- Answer your questions about raising bilingual children by email, phone, or in person
- Give a talk at your school or community group to explain the benefits of bilingualism
- Provide access to further information and resources via our website and e-newsletter
- Invite your family to take part in cutting-edge research at the University of Edinburgh.



## Talk to us

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THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
School of Philosophy, Psychology  
& Language Sciences

# Helping your child succeed

At least 186 languages are spoken in Scotland, according to the 2011 census. This means there are more and more families raising children with two or more languages.

Bilingual families come in all shapes and sizes, but one thing they all share is the desire to do the best for their children.

Speaking two languages can help a child:

- Maintain a link with their family culture and heritage
- Develop stronger skills in reading, language learning, attention and thinking.

**Bilingualism Matters** can help parents make the most of this opportunity.



## Common questions answered

*How early should we start speaking both languages to our child?*

As early as possible! Research shows that children do not confuse the two languages no matter how early you start.

*What is the best way to raise a bilingual child?*

There is no 'correct' method that works for all families. What's important is that your child hears both languages in roughly equal amounts, and in a natural setting.

*We are not native speakers of English. Should we be speaking English at home?*

Even if you don't speak English at home, your child will pick up English very quickly once they start school. You can give your child a head start by attending English-language playgroups and nurseries before starting school.

*My two-year-old child is not speaking yet in either language – what is wrong?*

Bilingual children often start talking a bit later than other children. Most will catch up soon. If the delay carries on, ask a specialist for advice.



Visit [www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk](http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk) for more information about bilingualism, our research in this area and our work with local government and schools.